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SOURCE Jen-min Jih-pao

DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY IN CENTRAL-SOUTH
AND SOUTHWEST CHINA MINORITY NATIONALITY AREAS

This report presents two statements showing the status and development of minority nationality affairs in Central-South China and in Southwest China Administrative Regions.

REGIONAL AUTONOMY IN CENTRAL-SOUTH CHINA

Chang Chih-i, chairman of the Nationalities Affairs Committee of the Central-South China Military and Administrative Committee, gave a critical report on the development of nationality regional autonomy in Central-South China to the second conference of the Commission of the Affairs of Nationalities of the Central People's Government which was held 14 - 31 December 1951.

The Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao of 18 February 1952 published the important parts of Chang's statement, and pertinent excerpts from it are as follows:

All-nationalities, all-circles people's representatives conferences have been held on from one to three occasions in the minority nationality areas. The number of minority nationality representatives participating in all types of representatives conferences generally exceeded the number apportioned them according to population ratio. Minority nationality cadres participate in a large number of ch'u and hsiaang administrations and some minority nationality cadres became ch'u chiefs or deputy chiefs, hsiaang chiefs, and hsten magistrates or deputy magistrates. Trade and cultural education agencies have also taken in a considerable number of minority nationality cadres.

The activities of establishing minority nationality administrations have been completed in Long-sheng Hsien in Kwangsi.

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The experience of the past 2 years proves that there are many comrades who do not have a grasp of minority policies. They do not know how to coordinate the special characteristics of the present level of development of the local minority nationalities and fail to organize work activities which a majority of the people demand. In addition, the cadres in all minority nationality localities on the hsien level and above came from elsewhere and, in the past, have had very little, if any, direct contact with minority nationalities.

The cadres below the hsien level are new and it is very easy for them to develop the ideological errors of "greater nationalism" or "narrow nationalism." Regarding the problem of establishing democratic nationality administrations, there are some comrades who feel that the demand for implementing regional autonomy is unnecessary because it divides the nationalities and accentuates religious factionalism. These comrades say that the people's government is for the people and belongs to all the people of the minority nationalities and, therefore, there is no need to speak about autonomy or lack of autonomy. There are still some who believe that a large group of minority nationalities have been admitted to participate in government, consequently, they need no regional autonomy since they virtually have self-government. For these reasons, they are not earnest or conscientious in advancing regional autonomy or establishing democratic nationality coalition governments.

REGIONAL AUTONOMY IN SOUTHWEST CHINA

In a statement on the Condition of Minority Nationality Work in Southwest China, submitted to the second conference of the Commission of the Affairs of Nationalities of the Central People's Government held 14 - 21 December 1951, Wang Wei-chou, chairman of Nationalities Affairs Committee of the Southwest China Military and Administrative Committee, devoted a section of his report to the development of regional autonomy. His statement was published in the Peiping Jen-min Jih-pao on 11 February 1952 and pertinent excerpts from it are as follows:

In January 1951, the Nationalities Affairs Committee of the Southwest China Military and Administrative Committee convened a plenary conference and decided to start work on establishing democratic administrations throughout the region. All levels of the people's governments in the Southwest minority nationality areas have convened all nationalities, all-circles people's representatives conferences or nationality representatives conferences. Democratic nationality regional autonomy has been actively established in localities where minority nationalities are concentrated and democratic nationality coalition governments set up in multinationality localities.

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During the liberation of Yunnan, these elements conspired to organize the Han-shao Federation to destroy all the activities liberating minority nationalities. Because the broad masses of all the minority nationalities were united by us and the leadership resolutely promoted activities for minority nationality democratic administration, we were able to crush all the destructive plots of the enemy.

In our work we have faced many internal difficulties. There were some cadres in all localities who did not sufficiently understand the significance of establishing democratic administration and who felt that this was unnecessary and troublesome. They worried about exciting minority nationality dissension, and by arousing nationality independence and emphasizing that conditions were not propitious, they procrastinated in establishing democratic administrations. We have carried on persuasion work with this group.

In the minority nationality localities where democratic administrations have been established there have been notable developments in all lines of work. This fact influenced our cadres to recognize gradually that minority nationality democratic administration is the basic policy for the solution of minority nationality problems.

New problems also face the cadres working among the minority nationalities. Within minority nationalities there are conditions of disunity among the chieftains of feuding tribes. This disunity becomes a matter of concern in the management of the autonomous districts, with respect to their internal unity and solidarity. It is also of concern to the border districts where difficulties have arisen regarding administrative status, the democratic system, and the assignment of personnel. But these problems are being solved gradually since there has been a better understanding of the minority nationality policy and because the problems have been thoroughly discussed by leaders and persons closely related with the masses in the light of actual conditions of the minority nationalities.

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